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From: Commander, U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Central Command
To: Distribution List

Subj: COMMANDER, U. S. MARINE CORPS FORCES, CENTRAL COMMAND UNIT,
PERSONAL & FAMILY READINESS PROGRAM (UPFRP) GUIDANCE

Ref: (a) MCO 1754.9
(b) MCO 5380.2

1. I have a great appreciation for how a well-managed Unit, Personal and Family Readiness Program (UPFRP) should function and I am convinced MARCENT will achieve greater operational readiness through an increased focus on personal and family readiness. In order to assist you in this endeavor, I pass the following updated guidance on management of your UPFRP.

2. Meeting the standard set forth in MCO 1754.9 is challenging and requires a concerted effort from all members of your Family Readiness Command Team (FRCT). The FRCT must focus on executing the four program tenets -- Communication, Readiness and Deployment Support (RDS), Information and Referral (I&R), Volunteer Management and build partnerships with MacDill AFB Airman and Family Readiness Center (AFRC), Navy Fleet and Family Support, (Bahrain) and other agencies which provide program support to our Marines, Sailors and families. We must also embrace a paradigm shift from a social events-heavy program to a communications-centric program, led by the Commander and supported by the Family Readiness Officer (FRO), Family Readiness Command Team (FRCT) and unit volunteers. Creating self-sufficient, resilient and ready Marines, Sailors and families should be the focus of MARCENT UPFRP. But, I expect leaders and FROs to clearly understand that while the Commander ensures the implementation of the UPFRP, IT IS THE INDIVIDUAL MARINE OR SAILOR THAT IS RESPONSIBLE AND ACCOUNTABLE FOR THEIR PERSONAL READINESS AND THE READINESS OF THEIR FAMILIES.

3. The UPFRP is designed to serve as a support function to assist Marine leaders, NOT to replace small unit leadership. Continuous command engagement is necessary and there must be involvement from all levels for this program to be successful. By remaining engaged with leaders at all levels within your unit, your unit UPFRP will ensure a high state of personal and family readiness and, in the long run, increase your unit's overall readiness. Additionally, the foundation of the UPFRP is underpinned by the relationship between the FRCT, and other support agencies at every level. To continue expanding UPFRP capacity, we must continue to build and nurture partnerships to help leverage the training and programs that MCFTB and other supporting agencies offer in support of our Marines, Sailors and families. Information and referral is a program tenet that is best served by FRCT members who can articulate capabilities and benefits of local programs and support functions, as well as other

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agencies located both on and off-base. FROs, Advisors, Assistants and Deputy FROs are required to do this by Order and other members of your UPFRP should also attend local Marine Corps Family Team Building (MCFTB) training to make them better advocates for these programs.

4. All command members need to understand the roles and duties of the unit FRO. FROs are not party planners or childcare providers -- they are Special Staff Officers assigned to commanders who serve as communicators, first and foremost. The majority of your time should be spent communicating your Command's vision and intent for the UPFRP, as well as ensuring the program tenets are being executed per the UPFRP Order. I expect FROs to be well known in their units, routinely out and about with their Marines and Sailors and their families. They should be outgoing and approachable and appreciated if not liked by those they serve. Nonetheless, social events are important for networking and developing support structures for our Marines, Sailors and their families. In an expeditionary environment, this is especially true. The social aspect of UPFRP needs to complement the four program tenets, not detract from them. These events require a substantial investment from the FRO and, if not managed properly, can serve to set unrealistic expectations about program roles and capabilities. FROs, as Special Staff Officers, should be involved in these events but as part of a team that includes other staff members, the unit FRCT, and unit volunteers, all of whom are focused on executing the Command's UPFRP vision and intent.

5. Most of the 40+ tasks FROs are required to perform or accomplish are located in Chapter 3 of the UPFRP Order. Tasks outside the program tenets may degrade your capability to a point where Marines, Sailors and families are not being supported to an appropriate level. To avoid this, and to maximize value added by the FRO, I will instruct to task according to the UPFRP Order and hold FROs accountable.

6. Official communication should deliver accurate, relevant and timely information by the most efficient means available. This is the FRO's primary duty, and should account for most of your time. Continuous communication with unit families is the most effective means of limiting the destructive circle of unknown, guessing, gossip and stress. To accomplish this, you are provided with an organizational communication system which includes eMarine, unit website, email, and newsletters. I expect MARCENT FROs to be experts in communication and in use of the appropriate communications tools, especially eMarine. You will comply with requirements in the Order and assess and make recommendations for improvement through your chain of command in order to ensure communication and outreach is widespread and accessible. As stated earlier, FROs are Special Staff Officers to their commander, and while you do not operate within a FRO hierarchy or have tasking authority over subordinate FROs, the higher headquarter FROs represent and support a Commander who does. The MARCENT FRO often requires vertical tasking to accomplish assigned missions, and I need your continued support and the support of your FRCTs to complete these requirements.

7. New MCO 5380.2 Volunteer Services Management, published September 2015 - Volunteers are another important component of the UPFRP. While the FRO is most directly responsible for the management of volunteers in the UPFRP, the entire FRCT should be included in developing recruitment strategies to ensure diversity in culture, ethnicity, experience, rank. Include parents

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and extended family members by having opportunities available which are not restricted by geographic proximity to the unit. Additionally, as integral members of your team, volunteers deserve adequate resources to make the most of their efforts. The UPFRP must be prioritized comparable to operational functions and resource shortfalls should be communicated through the chain of command. I expect MARCENT FROs to identify those volunteers that contribute the most and ensure they are appropriately recognized throughout the Chain of Command. The MARCENT FRO is the appointed USMC installation Volunteer Coordinator who will provide opportunities to Marines and Families and also collect volunteer data using the SF-2793. Family Readiness Advisors have a unique role on the FRCT. They may serve as volunteers under the guidance and supervision of the FRO but, when serving in the role of Family Readiness Advisor, they are guided by standard position descriptions. As such, they shall serve laterally with the FRCT to support the UPFRP and the commander, respecting the responsibilities of the FRO as the UPFRP Program Manager.

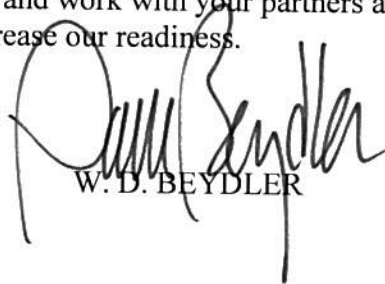
8. MARCENT Headquarters, being located on an Air Force installation, does not receive the usual \$25 per Marine per year allocation but receives \$1.00 per Marine per year in accordance with Airforce Instruction (AFI). 5th MEB Marines on NSA Bahrain are supported by Navy MWR funds and are allocated \$2.50 per Marine/Sailor for each quarter which is approximately \$600 per quarter. MARCENT does receive yearly APF funds that are budgeted for both UPFRP and MCFTB, funds received must be expended by the end of the MCCS fiscal year unless a waiver is granted. As a FRO, you must ensure your Commander is advised on the appropriate use of this money and how it is being spent. Tracking personnel movement across units can create a challenge in the use of funds. Communication between FROs and the frequent comparison of inbound and outbound lists against unit rosters will support the receipt of sufficient funds to accomplish UPFRP training and events both at parent and gaining commands. I expect ALL allocated funds to be spent on our Marines and Sailors and their families -- and well spent. Use of those funds to augment general Marine Corps Birthday Ball expenses should be avoided.

9. To ensure single Marines are not forgotten when it come to Family Readiness, the unit Single Marine Program (SMP) will be an integral part of your UPFRP. FROs are required to attend quarterly SMP council meetings and should strive to incorporate their unit SMP rep during unit event planning. Not all events can meet the needs of both married and single Marines and Sailors and the FRO must ensure equitable use of funds in support of both populations. Additional consideration should be given to Marines and Sailors who are single parents or who have the responsibility of care for a dependent when planning events and the use of funds as well. Of note, MARCENT MacDill AFB and 5thMEB NSA Bahrain Single Marines and Sailors are supported by Single Airman, and Navy Liberty programs respectively.

10. Family Care Plans (FCP) also help to increase personal and family readiness by ensuring Marines and Sailors have planned for the care of their dependents in their absence. These are especially important in an OCONUS environment where a Marine's natural support structure is likely on the other side of the globe. MCO 1740.13C serves as the source reference on FCPs. FROs must continually educate Marines and Sailors on the requirement to have a viable FCP and the responsibility for updating their FCP in a timely manner to reflect life changes. FROs are not responsible for completing, managing or keeping Family Care Plans.

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11. As the MARCENT UPFRP continues to evolve to keep pace with the ever increasing demands on our force, it is imperative that we maintain clarity on the program's intent: to create ready and resilient Marines, Sailors and families. Stay focused on program tenets -- Communication, Readiness and Deployment Support (RDS), Information and Referral (I&R), Volunteer Management -- this is a case where more is not better -- ensure you communicate your Commander's Intent for the UPFRP and work with your partners and your volunteers to expand and improve the program and increase our readiness.



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